



PRESS RELEASE

17 JUNE 2022

NUS announces new Financial Capability and Asset Building Training curriculum for frontline officers and volunteers supporting the low-income in Singapore

Developed with Citi Foundation's funding, the new curriculum follows success of training programme for social workers rolled out in 2020

Singapore, 17 June 2022 – The Next Age Institute (NAI) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) has embarked on an initiative to develop the **Singapore Financial Capability and Asset Building (SG FCAB)-Frontline Training curriculum**. The curriculum aims to equip frontline officers and volunteers from public, social services and community agencies with knowledge and skills to help low-income individuals and families improve their financial capabilities.

The development of the new SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum, which began in January 2022, follows the success of the **SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme** which was rolled out in 2020 by the Department of Social Work at NUS FASS to specifically train social workers and social work students to support the most financially vulnerable in Singapore.

NAI's plans to develop the SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum is supported by nine stakeholder-organisations. They are the Ministry of Social and Family Development, National Council of Social Service, MENDAKI, Singapore Prison Service, People's Association, Institute for Financial Literacy, Singapore After-Care Association, Care Corner Singapore Ltd and AMKFSC Community Services Ltd.

Citi Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Citigroup, has awarded a grant of US\$330,000 towards the development of the SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum and the training of 200 more social workers in the SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme from January 2022 to June 2023. From 2017 to 2021, it had awarded grants totalling US\$630,000 to develop and roll out the SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme that trained more than 250 social workers and more than 150 social work students to support the most financially vulnerable populations in Singapore.

Commenting on the SG FCAB initiative, Citi's ASEAN Head and Citi Country Officer for Singapore, Mr Amol Gupte said, "The development of the new SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum marks another significant milestone in Citi's 120 anniversary year in Singapore. Citi has been demonstrating its commitment to enable growth and progress in the community, and

we are pleased to continue our financial inclusion efforts in supporting the vulnerable through the partnership with the NUS FASS Department of Social Work and the Next Age Institute.”

The plans for the new SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum and impact of the SG-FCAB Social Work Training programme were announced today at the “Financial Capability and Asset Building (FCAB): Maximising Potential, Empowering Communities” event organised by NAI and the NUS FASS Department of Social Work. Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development, and Second Minister for Health, attended the event as the Guest-of-Honour and delivered a speech which highlighted the importance of helping lower-income families to strengthen their financial management capabilities and how FCAB training could equip social workers, frontline staff and volunteers with the skills and knowledge to enable this.

Also speaking at the event, Associate Professor Chia Ngee Choon, Co-Director of NAI shared, “Together with social workers, frontline staff and volunteers play a crucial role in the overall help system. Low-income individuals and families who have worked through their social and financial vulnerabilities with the support of social workers, can continue to work with frontline staff and volunteers as part of the wider support system network to achieve their aspirations. With the SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum, frontline staff and volunteers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to continue supporting low-income individuals and families to enhance their financial capabilities and asset building efforts.”

Adjunct Associate Professor Corinne Ghoh, SG FCAB-Frontline Project Lead at NAI highlighted that “instead of being prescriptive, FCAB principles emphasise the importance of listening, understanding, and building trusting relationships with recipients of help. This enables them to become more in control of their circumstances and helps them develop increased financial functioning to achieve their goals. When low-income individuals and families experience support in making informed decisions about their finances, they are empowered to assume greater control over their lives and move towards positive changes”.

The SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum

A nine-member Resource Committee chaired by NAI, which comprises representatives from the stakeholder-organisations was formed in April 2022. The Resource Committee will play a key role in providing guidance on the curriculum development and training of the sector.

NAI will also be conducting focus group discussions with frontline staff and volunteers who work with low-income individuals and families, to assess the training needs and identify gaps in practice.

It will also pilot the curriculum at the community level with 60 frontline staff and volunteers in the third quarter of 2022. The process of development, testing and refinement of the curriculum will be completed by June 2023. The aim is to institutionalise the SG FCAB-Frontline Training curriculum in the form of a programme as part of ongoing field learning and training for this group.

An update on the impact of the SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme

The SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme was offered from 2020 through the Continuing Professional Education arm of the NUS FASS Department of Social Work, with the curriculum developed by NAI from 2017 to 2019.

Associate Professor Esther Goh, Head of the Department of Social Work shared, “The success of the SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme is evident from the overwhelming response and positive feedback from SG FCAB-trained social workers who have enhanced

their competencies in the area of financial social work. Aligned with the core values of social work, the SG FCAB-Social Work Training programme equips social workers with the knowledge and skills to actively engage clients in shaping their financial goals, harnessing their strengths to increase financial functioning and achieving sustainable financial outcomes.”

The plenary session at today’s event discussed the social innovations by social workers who went through the programme and how they applied FCAB principles to uplift lives and address financial challenges faced by their low-income clients.

Ms Grace Xu, Head of the Social Work Team at AWWA Transitional Shelter, who attended the SG FCAB training, said “I gained confidence and competency in navigating resources, shared benefits, and opportunities to enhance clients’ employability and strengthened their aspirations in achieving their financial goals.” Citing an example, she shared, “The knowledge of the Progressive Wage Model enabled me to better understand and support my client’s efforts to improve his employability and eventually advance his employment prospects.”

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Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, 30 university-level research institutes, research centres of excellence and corporate labs focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

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